

# **REHABILITATION IN COMPLEX POLITICAL EMERGENCIES: IS REBUILDING CIVIL SOCIETY THE ANSWER?**

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## **Summary**

The paper examines the challenge of rehabilitation from complex political emergencies (CPEs) and identifies a strategy that is characterised as a civil society rebuilding approach. It focuses on Somalia and a case study of a CARE project that aims to build the capacity of local NGOs. The paper argues that civil society in CPEs is simultaneously being undermined and contested by warring parties and emerging after state collapse. It finds that international agencies have tended to focus on civil society institutions simply as conduits for aid money and that this has tended to create organisations which lack downwards accountability, are dependent on donors and are not addressing the wider roles for civil society envisaged in the approach. Rebuilding civil society does hold out the promise of giving non military interests a stronger voice and starting a process of changing the aid delivery culture. Achieving these objectives, however, will be a slow and largely indigenous process and there is a need for lowered expectations about what outside assistance can achieve. Civil society rebuilding is not a magic wand for the problems faced in today's CPEs, but it does suggest a strategy that could enable agencies to address some of the failings of past humanitarian assistance.

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## 1 INTRODUCTION

This paper will examine the challenge of rehabilitation from complex political emergencies (CPEs). Green estimated in 1995 that at least 14 countries in sub Saharan Africa, with a total population in excess of 175,000,000, faced post-war reconstruction (Green 1995a). Historically there are examples of successful post war rehabilitation, such as the Marshall Plan after World War II and Uganda in the 1980s; as well as failed attempts, such as the UNOSOM debacle in Somalia. It is clear, therefore, that the tendency of the development literature to ignore conflict as an unwelcome aberration needs to change. As Swift argues, 'development thinking can no longer claim that conflict falls outside its mandate' (Swift 1996; 1).

The long lasting nature of many of today's CPEs has led to a desire on the part of the international community to move beyond relief and engage in rehabilitation even during ongoing conflicts. Assistance is seen as needing to seize critical thresholds during the conflict process and to tackle the root causes of conflict. As aid agencies attempt to tackle these concerns, similar strategies are being articulated in a number of diverse situations. Drawing on experience from a wide range of CPEs such as Afghanistan, Somalia, Liberia, Angola and south Sudan, a variety of different agencies and academics are arguing that the key to rehabilitation is a strategy of working with and attempting to rebuild civil society. It has been most clearly articulated by Prendergast: 'the primary objective of interventions [in CPEs] in the future should be to utilise and to build on the capacity of emergent civil and political structures and institutions, in order to reverse the erosion of civil society' (Prendergast 1997: 150).

The claims being made for the potential of these civil society institutions and organisations are substantial. It is argued that, by working with local partners, international agencies can engage in more developmental forms of relief and move assistance towards rehabilitation and development. A strong civil society is also seen as a potential counterweight to the power of predatory militia and government structures. Support for civil society is advocated as a strategy that can promote peace building in conflict ravaged societies. It is an approach that draws on currently popular development discourses around civil society, capacity building, linking relief and development and conflict resolution. This dissertation will argue that the approach can be characterised as an emerging narrative (Roe 1991). The objective of the dissertation will be to test this emerging narrative by examining the theory that informs it and, how it works in practice.

A first step is to gather the different strands of this emerging approach and identify its main features. As the strategy has emerged largely from agency policy on the ground in CPEs, little work has been done on its theoretical underpinnings. The dissertation will argue that what happens to civil society before, during and after CPEs is more complex than the narrative implies and so rebuilding it more difficult. The theory that informs the strategy is characterised by confusion and ambiguity and, in common with other narratives it presents an over-simplified story. There is a need for more analytical understanding of the processes affecting civil society in CPEs if support to emerging structures of civil society is to be constructive.

This paper will not attempt to provide definitive answers about the viability of the theory or practice of this approach. The approach itself is at best embryonic and even identifying it as a way of approaching rehabilitation must be done tentatively. The theory behind the concepts of civil society and capacity building is notoriously vague and contested and little theoretical analysis of whether the two theories are even

applicable in the context of CPEs has been attempted. Most of the literature on civil society assumes the existence of a coherent national state, so adapting it for use in a situation where the state has collapsed, is problematic. Finally, research and data from CPEs is difficult to come by and while there is an emerging literature on CPEs, it is at a preliminary stage. Any conclusions will therefore have to be tentative and appropriately modest.

The paper will be structured as follows. Section 2 will sketch the main features and origins of an emerging approach to rehabilitation from CPEs. Section 3 will examine the concept of civil society. Section 4 will tackle the literature on CPEs, looking specifically at what theory can tell us about how CPEs affect civil society. Section 5 will examine the concept of rehabilitation. Sections 6 and 7 present a case study, which will examine civil society and rehabilitation in Somalia. Section 6 will address how civil society has been affected by the ongoing CPE and the implications this has for international agencies attempting to pursue rehabilitation programmes in Somalia. Section 7 will focus specifically on a CARE project which funds local NGOs and aims to build their capacity. From this review of the theory and practical experience behind this emerging approach, a conclusion, section 8, will identify the potential and pitfalls of an institution building approach to rehabilitation in CPEs.

## **1.1 Methodology**

Sections two to five are based on reviews of the literature on civil society, social capital, CPEs and rehabilitation. The paper draws on a study of rehabilitation in the Greater Horn undertaken for CARE International (Harvey, Maxwell and Campbell 1997 and Harvey 1997b). The case study in sections six and seven is based on a 3 week consultancy for CARE in Somalia and Nairobi during July, on rehabilitation in Somalia (Harvey 1997a).

The fieldwork was focused on evaluating the approach to rehabilitation taken by CARE-Somalia's Umbrella Grant Partnership Project. Interviews in Nairobi were conducted with international staff from UN agencies, donors and international NGOs to get a comparative perspective of approaches to rehabilitation in Somalia amongst the international community. Interviews were also conducted with CARE staff in Nairobi and CARE project documents were reviewed. Two trips to Somalia were made: to Bossaso for one week and to Mogadishu for 4 days. In both sites interviews were conducted with CARE's Somali staff and with members of the local NGOs that CARE is working with. Focus group discussions and workshops were also held with the local NGOs. Time constraints, and the Terms of Reference for CARE, meant that the focus was specifically on CARE programming issues, rather than looking more broadly at civil society. For section 7, I was also able to draw on personal experience of running a rehabilitation programme in Somalia for an international NGO, during 1994 and 1995.

## **2 A CIVIL SOCIETY APPROACH TO REHABILITATION**

This section will outline the main features behind what we have characterised as a civil society rebuilding approach to rehabilitation. It will attempt to show what has prompted the emergence of this approach and where, and how, it is being applied.

Recent definitions of rehabilitation have argued that strengthening local institutional capacity is a crucial component of the transition from relief to development. For example, the European Union has stated:

Rehabilitation must be conceived and implemented as a strategy encompassing institutional reform and strengthening ... People - both victims and participants - must be reintegrated into civil society (European Union 1996: 6).

Local institutions are seen as a key part of providing more sustainable assistance and moving away from relief. This is linked to the recent discourse around linking relief and development. Traditional relief was portrayed as top down, standardised and frequently resulting in incapacitation of local capacity. The answer was for relief interventions to pay more attention to enhancing local capacity; of government where that was possible, but also of NGOs and local communities. Following on from this, rehabilitation was seen as a crucial but neglected link that could ease the transition from relief to development. It should incorporate developmental principles; 'working with and through local institutions and consulting with local people about their perceptions and needs' (Buchanan-Smith and Maxwell 1994, p. 8).

The problem in many of today's CPEs is that rehabilitation is being contemplated without the emergence of effective government structures. In countries such as Somalia and Liberia there is no national government and even at the local and regional levels, the degree of government is rudimentary. What authorities do remain are often seen as part of the problem, rather than the solution. Predatory militias, warlords or decaying governments are the very authorities that are, in part, responsible for the emergency in the first place. Often they are still fighting, are using military tactics that deliberately create famine and are responsible for the diversion and manipulation of relief. In these situations the question of who to work with is especially problematic.

Despite these problems there is a desire on the part of donors to move beyond relief and begin rehabilitation, even in situations of ongoing conflict. There are a number of reasons for this desire to start the rehabilitation process as soon as possible.

- The situation in parts of the country or for periods of time is perceived as peaceful enough to begin rehabilitation.
- In the context of donor pressure to improve the efficiency of aid delivery, and donor fatigue at prolonged provision of relief, rehabilitation programming is seen as more efficient and cost effective than relief programming.
- It is hoped that rehabilitation may provide an impetus towards peace building and conflict resolution and be able to address the root causes of conflict.

- There are concerns that continued provision of relief may serve to prolong the conflict and attract further violence.

It is in response to these pressures that a narrative around rebuilding civil society is emerging. Narratives are defined by Roe as simplifying stories that mobilise action. He argues that uncertainty helps to create, 'broad explanatory narratives that can be operationalised into standard approaches with widespread application' (Roe 1991: 288).

The arguments that make up this emerging narrative can be characterised as follows. A strong civil society is crucial to development. In CPEs civil society and social capital are badly eroded. Given that there is no government to work with, governance capacity needs to be rebuilt from the bottom up, by strengthening civil society and rebuilding social capital. It is hoped that this will marginalise existing predatory authorities. Strengthening non military interests will create a platform for peace by allowing space and a voice for civil society to express its desire for peace. Richards (1996: 163) for example, argues that, 'coping with war depends on cultural and institutional resourcefulness within civil society' and argues that international agencies should attempt to support this resourcefulness.

The approach has emerged largely from agency policy on the ground in CPEs. Hence we have Operation Lifeline Sudan (OLS) becoming involved in capacity building, through supporting local NGOs and rebel humanitarian wings (Karim et al 1996). In Afghanistan UNDP has built its rehabilitation programme around shuras (traditional political institutions) and argues that 'to invest in rebuilding is still the best chance to invest in peace' (Meier 1997: 15). In Somalia the CARE Umbrella programme works with local Somali NGOs and ACTIONAID has provided support for peace conferences held by local elders (CARE 1996, Bradbury 1993). In Liberia Lowenkopf argues that the emergence of block committees to handle the distribution of food aid is evidence of an emerging strength in civil society which could provide a countervailing force to the militias (Lowenkopf 1995). Figure 1 summarises how this approach is being applied in a number of countries.

**Figure 1: Examples of a civil society rebuilding approach to rehabilitation**

Country	International Agency	Local Organisations	Projects	Approach / claims
Afghanistan	UNDP	shuras (council of elders) local NGOs	Small scale rural rehabilitation e.g. - irrigation, roads	sustainable grassroots programmes create an environment for peace
Somalia	CARE	local NGOs	agriculture water, health and income generation	partnership & institutional capacity building LNGOs 'a viable alternative towards positive change'
South Sudan	USAID / UNICEF	civil authorities chiefs, churches village level committees	roads, health, local barter shops, seeds and tools	creation of local capacity, more cost effective, improve accountability
Somaliland	ACTIONAID	elders, CBOs	peace conferences, development projects	INGO less vulnerable to conflict, peace building
Liberia	UN	block committees community welfare teams	food distribution community reconstruction needs	emerging strength in civil society, countervailing force to militias
Angola	ACORD	community based organisations	resettlement of displaced communities	participation and community ownership
Sierra Leone	none	citizen vigilante groups	defence against rebels and government troops	Richards - 'coping with war depends on resourcefulness in civil society' (1996)

This narrative presents a beguiling prospect. It fits with the current enthusiasm for bottom up, participatory, and empowering development. It seems to remove the need to rely on the current unpleasant leaders to form the next government and lead the rehabilitation process. It incorporates three currently fashionable development concepts: civil society, social capital and capacity building. It allows international agencies to claim that by working with civil society institutions they are engaging with the current enthusiasm for conflict resolution or peace building.

Development narratives are seen as serving useful functions for those who articulate and promote them. Roe argues that they often represent the views of an expert elite, who use them to claim a stakeholding in the problem being addressed by the narrative. It is important to emphasise that, in this case, the approach is at a preliminary stage and so it is probably too early to make these broader claims about its functions as a narrative. Two tentative arguments can, however, be put forward. Firstly, the approach is largely being advocated by international relief agencies working in CPEs. For them it may serve to justify their continued presence in the face of criticism of the role played by humanitarian assistance in supporting warring parties. Secondly, by presenting a simplifying story, it may enable international agencies to avoid engaging with complex political processes and so bolster their claim to neutrality.

Through its adoption of currently popular development discourses, there is a danger that this narrative will be accepted uncritically, as an idea whose time has come. There is a need, therefore, to look critically, at the theory behind the approach and the way in which the approach has adapted these theories to the context of CPEs. The emerging narrative makes three key assertions about the potential for rehabilitation in CPEs. These are:

- It is possible to engage in rehabilitation even in ongoing CPEs.
- Strengthening civil society is a way to move from relief towards more developmental programming.
- Civil society can contribute to a process of peace building and conflict resolution.

The following sections will examine whether these assertions are valid.

### **3 CIVIL SOCIETY**

There is a general debate within the development literature on the importance of civil society as a key component in promoting both development and democracy. In both the neo-liberal and neo-populist development paradigms civil society, and recently social capital, are seen as playing a key role in promoting democratic values and participation and serving as a counterbalance to the power of the state. Promoting and strengthening civil society is advocated as a key role of development assistance. The term civil society, however, is characterised by a high degree of conceptual confusion and analytical ambiguity. There is an enormous literature in social and political theory which discusses the historical pedigree and theoretical significance of the term but little agreement about what it means or how it should be used. The aim of this section is not an exhaustive review of the voluminous literature, but to understand why the term is currently so popular in development discourse, some of the dangers of this popularity and to highlight the main issues that will need to be addressed in examining how civil society can contribute to rehabilitation in CPEs. It will also briefly look at social capital, arguing that the term is closely linked to the concept of civil society.

#### **3.1 What is civil society and social capital?**

Civil society re-emerged in political discourse in the mid 1980s and has since been widely adopted as a useful concept by both development theorists and by development projects. Its meaning, however, has remained unclear and it has been used in a bewildering variety of different ways. It has served both as an analytical tool for analysing state-society relations and as a normative concept, where it is seen as crucial to development and democratisation. This section aims to try and make sense of this array of definitions and to sketch out the main approaches and meanings given to civil society in order to understand how it is understood in theoretical and practical contemporary debate.

Competing interpretations of civil society have their roots in various currents of Western political philosophy. In the liberal tradition, civil society is portrayed as a plurality of civil associations which serve to counterbalance the power of the state, advocate popular demands and promote democratic values. In this

tradition, civil society is seen in positive terms as contributing to democracy and development and is portrayed as largely independent from the state. The Marxist tradition criticises this perspective. Hegel and Marx saw civil society as the product of a long historical process governed by the emergence of a sphere of market relations under capitalism. Civil society was equated with the bourgeoisie. More recently Gramsci, writing in the Marxist tradition, portrayed civil society as an arena of conflict. Civic institutions reproduce and disseminate the hegemonic values of the dominant classes but this hegemony can be contested by social movements representing alternative norms. In this tradition civil society is seen in terms of conflict, with the state attempting to penetrate and control civil society.

Recently, the concept of civil society has been adopted by proponents of various developmental discourses. It has been embraced by the neo-liberal, good government and neo-populist agendas. Neo-liberals have used the concept to bolster the case for deregulation and privatisation and to explain the crisis of the developmental state. Civil society is seen as a counter-balance to over centralised states and has provided an intellectual rationale for attacks on state power. A vibrant civil society is seen as providing a check on the state and as indispensable in fostering a vibrant market economy.

Strengthening civil society has also emerged as an increasingly important element of the good government agenda and interest has focused on the role played by civil society in democratic consolidation (Robinson 1995). Diamond (1994) for example, argues that a vibrant civil society is essential for consolidating and maintaining democracy. A strong civil society is seen as providing channels of communication and promoting accountability between the state and its citizens.

More or less at the same time but coming from a different direction neo-populist development theorists and practitioners embraced civil society, particularly NGOs and grassroots organisations, as paradigms of social participation and potential building blocks of democracy (Chambers 1997 Salmen 1992). Civil society is seen as a way of reaching the grassroots, encouraging bottom-up development and generating participation from the poor and disempowered. From this has emerged what Stewart describes as the, 'friendly stereotype' of NGOs. They are described as intrinsically innovative, flexible, participatory, low cost, responsive to the grassroots and an important component of civil society (Stewart 1997).

The term social capital has recently been adopted by development practitioners and academics. It derives from social theory and from the broad idea that social relationships are resources that help people act effectively. Its recent popularity has stemmed from Putnam who defines social capital as, 'features of social organisation, such as trust, norms and networks that can improve the efficiency of society by facilitating co-ordinated actions' (Putnam 1993: 167). Putnam's argument is that civic engagement, measured in terms of membership in horizontal networks, enhances social trust. These horizontal networks produce a social environment that breeds and facilitates responsive government. Civic communities demand better government, as they are more likely to stand up for the common good. They also create a social infrastructure through which public goods can be supplied with greater ease and effectiveness. The term is therefore closely linked to civil society, as Levi argues, Putnam's focus is on how the interactions within civil society are the source of effective government (Levi 1996). What the emerging literature on social capital adds to the debate on civil society is its emphasis on the importance of trust in social networks and



relationships. This is particularly important for our purposes as trust tends to be broken down in CPEs and needs to be rebuilt during rehabilitation.

From this review of the ways in which the concept of civil society has been adopted by development discourses, it is possible to identify a set of key contributions that civil society is seen as making to development. These are:

- A strong civil society can serve as a counterbalance to state power.
- Civil society can consolidate democracy.
- Civil society can open up channels of communication and promote accountability between the state and its citizens.
- Civil society can foster the growth of a strong, liberal market economy.
- NGOs can provide services in the absence of the state, empower communities, and build grassroots organisational capacity.

This review of the roles of civil society shows that an optimistic view of civil society is prevalent. Civil society is assumed to be independent from the state and also fundamentally positive. There is little room here for a more Gramscian view of civil society which acknowledges questions of power, sees civil society as a contested arena and acknowledges attempts by the state to penetrate and control civil society. This optimistic view also tends to ignore questions of social difference and risks romanticising the community. A large body of work has highlighted the fact that gender, age, wealth and other aspects of social identity crosscut community boundaries. It emphasises how diverse and often conflicting values pervade social life (Leach et al 1997).

There is little clarity in the literature about which sectors or components of civil society are expected to fulfil the roles envisaged. Civil society is often used in broad terms and there is little attempt to differentiate between different institutions and organisations. If the term is to serve as a useful analytical concept rather than as a slogan, first coming up with a usable definition of civil society and then differentiating between different sectors of civil society are key tasks. These will be addressed in the next two sections.

Most of the roles of civil society are seen in terms of its relationship with the state. The existence of a state to provide a regulative and protective framework is seen by some analysts as a pre-requisite for a strong civil society. Porter and Kilby argue, 'civil society is not likely to thrive, unless there is an effective, strong state which can establish the rules of the game and provide some discriminatory framework for civil society activities' (Porter and Kilby 1996: 32). Given that our interest is in countries where the state is decaying or has collapsed this suggests a need to question how civil society can be analysed without a state. This will be addressed in section 4.

### **3.2 Definition**

All of these competing interpretations use civil society as much as a normative concept as an analytical tool. It is seen as a tool for the promotion of democracy, the market economy or capitalism. This tends to result in

restrictive definitions of civil society with some sectors of society being selected as truly 'civil' and others being dismissed as authoritarian, traditional or pre-capitalist, depending on the divergent political and intellectual traditions of the writer.

For the purpose of this dissertation the need is for a definition of civil society that, as White argues, aims to come to terms with the breadth of the concept rather than restricting it to a more narrow set of phenomena. An inclusive definition is best able to capture the diversity of associational life in developing societies. Civil society will, therefore, be defined for our purposes as:

'an intermediate associational realm between state and family, populated by organisations enjoying some autonomy in relation to the state and formed voluntarily by members of society to protect their interests or values' (White 1994: 6)

By adopting an inclusive approach we hope to avoid linking civil society to any specific political project or ideological tradition. This sociological approach to civil society means that it embraces a wide range of social forces. These might be modern or traditional; foster or hinder democracy and be involved in, or outside, politics. It could include distinctly 'uncivil' entities such as the Mafia or the interhamwe (death squads in the Rwanda genocide). This definition, therefore, does not assume that civil society is a positive force for development. As Fatton argues, the emergence of civil society is contradictory; it can be repressive as well as liberating, inegalitarian as well as equalising and obscurantist as well as forward looking (Fatton 1992). An inclusive definition also allows for the incorporation of a more Gramscian perspective in which civil society is seen as a contested space. The definition of 'some autonomy' is not meant to imply complete separation or independence. This is particularly important for analysing civil society in CPEs, where predatory local authorities undermine and attempt to control civil society.

### **3.3 Breaking down civil society**

The inclusive definition presented above, means that distinctions need to be made between the different sectors of civil society. This section will attempt to differentiate between the different institutions and organisations that make up civil society. This is often neglected in much of the literature which tends to refer to civil society in generic terms without specifying what is actually meant, as White argues it, 'is commonly used in vague, simplistic or tendentious ways' (White 1994: 2).

Chazan provides a useful starting point for conceptualising the different levels and types of civil society in Africa (Chazan 1992).

1. Primary groups - indigenous institutions that are ascriptive - including kinship ties, traditional political institutions and authority structures, territorial networks around the community or village and cultural networks around ethnic groups.

2. Social and economic organisations - voluntary membership, more 'modern' - divided into occupational groups, women and student associations, other voluntary organisations and religious communities.

White, similarly argues that it is important to distinguish;

'between "modern" interest groups such as trade unions or professional associations and "traditional" ascriptive organisations based on kinship, ethnicity, culture or religion and between formal organisations and informal social networks based on patrimonial or clientelistic allegiances' (White 1994: 7).

There is a danger here of returning to a crude version of modernisation theory. These categories are not, therefore, presented as hard and fast distinctions between different parts of civil society and indeed many organisations, such as ethnic associations, would overlap between the two groups.

The first category of primary groups is often excluded from the literature on civil society, which would see them as part of traditional society. Civil society is restricted to 'modern' organisations such as trade unions or business associations, for example (Rakner 1992). I would argue that these primary groups are a key part of associational life in Africa and so must be included. This follows Hann and Dunn who argue that civil society should be understood to refer more loosely to the moral community and the problems of trust, accountability and cooperation that all groups face (Hann and Dunn 1996). This position, with its stress on the importance of trust and how it is generated in social life, links civil society closely to the emerging literature on social capital. Chazan argues that these primary groups are highly institutionalised, flexible and maintain a high degree of cohesion (Chazan 1992).

This raises the question of distinguishing between institutions and organisations. These terms are often used interchangeably, the distinction is characterised by a great deal of confusion and as Uphoff argues they are best understood as overlapping sets of phenomena (Uphoff 1997). North provides a useful clarification between them:

Institutions are the rules of the game of a society, or, more formally, are the humanly devised constraints that structure human interaction.

Organisations are the players: groups of individuals bound by a common purpose to achieve objectives. (North 1995: 23)

Another distinction commonly made in recent literature, which has focused on the role of NGOs, is between NGOs and community based organisations (CBOs). NGOs are seen as intermediaries between grassroots organisations and the state, and as essential actors for creating a strong association based civil society. Their role is viewed as a mechanism for politically and economically empowering membership organisations,

which constitute the base of civil society. CBOs are grassroots groups, formed by those directly affected by poverty, and often assisted by NGOs (Hudock 1996).

These different classifications suggest that civil society is made up of a range of organisations and institutions that operate at various levels and have different characteristics. For our purpose, a key distinction is between primary groupings that are more traditional, ascriptive and informal, such as kinship networks, traditional political institutions and ethnic groups, and more modern, voluntary and formal organisations at the secondary level. These categories are important for analysing the role of civil society in CPEs because the primary groupings seem to be better able to survive the destructive effects of conflict.

### **3.4 Conclusion**

This review has argued that the confusion surrounding the concept of civil society means that it should be approached with some caution. In recent development literature an optimistic view of civil society has prevailed. It is seen in broadly positive terms as a key contributor to democracy and development and serves more as a normative than an analytical concept. Civil society is portrayed as largely independent from the state.

There is little evidence on the mechanisms through which civil society is expected to fulfil the roles envisaged for it, or on how it can be built. In practice the focus seems to be on civil society organisations, particularly NGOs, as conduits for aid assistance. This raises questions about the capacity of local organisations to absorb aid resources and whether ‘doing development’ will create civil society institutions that will play the wider roles envisaged for them in the literature.

The emerging narrative sketched in section two shares some of these weaknesses. Civil society is used vaguely and generically and seen as a positive force. In fact, a view of civil society as apolitical and independent, may suit international agencies, as it would support the function, suggested in section two, of avoiding engagement with political processes.

Despite these ambiguities, this section has argued that civil society can serve as a useful analytical concept for examining the space between the family and the state. What is needed is to be specific about which components of civil society are expected to fulfil which tasks and how they will be encouraged to perform these tasks. There is also a need to look at the development of civil society as a process, in analytical rather than normative fashion. This will be attempted for civil society in CPEs in the next chapter.

The issues raised here are relevant to the role of civil society in CPEs in a number of ways. Firstly, in CPEs questions of power and control are central. This makes the optimistic view of civil society prevalent in the literature especially problematic and suggests a need for a more Gramscian perspective. Secondly, the primary groupings identified in section 3.3 are crucial fallback mechanisms in CPEs. As capacity building tends to focus on more formal organisations this suggests that it may be difficult to support informal primary groups such as elders or kinship networks. Thirdly, civil society is weakened in CPEs. This increases the likelihood that donor funding may overwhelm or distort the development of civil society. Finally, the roles civil society is expected to play need to be adapted to take into account the absence of national government in CPEs.

## **4 COMPLEX POLITICAL EMERGENCIES**

This section will first define CPEs and examine their main characteristics (section 4.1). Section 4.2 will consider the impact of CPEs on civil society; looking firstly, at civil society preceding CPEs (4.21), secondly, at civil society during CPEs (4.22) and finally, at the roles of civil society in collapsed states (4.23). Work on CPEs is at a preliminary stage. It has tended to focus on detailed case studies and there is still a lack of a comprehensive theoretical framework for analysing the complex processes at work in CPEs (African Rights 1994, Keen 1994, Duffield 1994, Macrae and Zwi 1994). To an extent, each CPE is unique, but some common theoretical points can be taken from this emerging literature.

### **4.1 Definition and characteristics**

The increasing importance of CPEs can be demonstrated by the fact that in 1960 there were 10 unresolved wars recognised by the UN and by 1993 there were 50 such wars, 30 of which were claiming more than 1,000 lives per year. Almost 90% of these were internal, and over half were defined by the UN as ‘complex emergencies’, a term which emerged in the late 1980s to describe major humanitarian crises of a multi-causal nature. A good definition of CPEs has been provided by Duffield:

‘complex emergencies are essentially political in nature: they are protracted political crises resulting from sectarian or predatory indigenous response to socio-economic stress and marginalisation .. (They) have a singular ability to erode or destroy the cultural, civil, political or economic integrity of established societies’ (Duffield 1994: 38).

CPEs seem to be superseding ideologically driven nationalist or socialist wars of liberation and can be seen more as resource wars that lack a clear social programme (Duffield 1991). As Lautze argues they, ‘entail the deliberate creation of crises’ (Lautze 1997: 4). Warring parties target vulnerable groups and social systems and networks as part of their military strategies. Humanitarian assistance itself often becomes a target of violence. An important point made by Keen is that CPEs often produce real benefits for powerful groups, as well as victims, and that these groups may have a vested interest in continuing the conflict (Keen 1994). CPEs also often result in the emergence of parallel economies that include processes of asset transfer.

The social divisions along ethnic, cultural, religious, linguistic or national lines which underlie conflict situations are cross-cut by gender divisions. As Byrne (1995: 3) argues, ‘conflict in CPEs centres on struggles over power and resources’ and it is important to consider how, ‘men and women are caught up in different ways in this struggle, through their different identities, differential access to and control over resources, and through changes in gender ideologies.’ Sometimes women may benefit from the social dislocation caused by conflict, as in the oft-quoted example of the empowerment of women in Eritrea and Tigray. In other situations women may be disempowered by conflict, for example by being the targets of rape and sexual violence, or through being forced into coping strategies which transgress social norms. Conflict situations can also bring rapid change in gender ideology and identities and this can produce more

conservative attitudes to women's behaviour decreasing their rights and mobility; the Taliban militia's policies towards women being an extreme example.

While CPEs weaken the authority of nation states, local authorities continue to be powerful, and to play a key role in mediating the provision of external assistance. As Prendergast argues, 'the long term success of external interventions is largely determined by the nature of the controlling authorities relationship with civilian populations' (Prendergast 1997: 146). A key distinction between different CPEs is the degree of predatoriness of local authorities; or to what degree the warring parties exploit and abuse local communities as part of their military strategy. As De Waal argues, warring parties after the Cold War are finding it more difficult to sustain and control armies and have turned to local sources of provisioning. Tactics include requisitioning, looting and taxing local populations, involvement in commerce and diverting humanitarian aid (De Waal 1996). Military strategies of destabilisation that include the use of exemplary terror, use of children as soldiers and manipulation of ethnicity have also become common. The degree to which warring parties in particular CPEs engage in these tactics varies. On one extreme are the highly disciplined fighters of the Eritrean People's Liberation Front (EPLF) who relied on the support of the local peasantry and exhibited a strong concern for social welfare. In Somalia, Liberia and south Sudan, however, the predatory strategies discussed above are prevalent and De Waal argues that this type of conflict represents the trend (De Waal 1996).

#### **4.2 The impact of CPEs on civil society**

This section will examine the impact of CPEs on civil society. The literature on CPEs tends to simply state that CPEs are destructive of civil society and that therefore it needs to be rebuilt in the rehabilitation period. For example Macrae and Zwi note, 'many contemporary conflicts are synonymous with the breakdown of civil institutions' (1994: 225). There is little, if any, analysis of how CPEs break down civil society and what implications this has for rebuilding. There is a need to have a better understanding of the processes at work in CPEs and this section will examine theoretical contributions that help in analysing these processes. It will ask three main questions. What are the processes affecting civil society in the period leading up to state collapse? How do CPEs affect civil society? How can we theorise about civil society in collapsed states? It will argue that the processes affecting civil society are more complex and contradictory than the simple point that CPEs are destructive of civil society. Civil society is often simultaneously an important source of support at the same time that it is being undermined and contested.

##### ***Processes affecting civil society in the period leading up to state collapse***

The processes affecting civil society prior to collapse are highly context specific but the theoretical literature does suggest some common themes in the processes at work. CPEs are often preceded by a process of state collapse, defined by Zartman as, 'a situation where the structure, authority, law and political order have fallen apart' (Zartman 1995: 1). Collapse can be seen as an extreme manifestation of a failure of governance (Luckham 1995). State collapse in Africa has often been preceded by authoritarian and tyrannical regimes which deliberately suppress and manipulate sectors of civil society in an attempt to cling onto power. The

governments of Barre in Somalia and Doe in Liberia are good examples of military regimes which attempted to suppress civil society. For example, in Liberia under Doe, Sawyer argues that, 'in the unlimited exercise of military control, every institution that formerly imposed social and cultural constraints on the exercise of power was severely weakened (Sawyer 1992: 295). The failure of these regimes leaves a vacuum created by the repression of civil society and Zartman argues that state collapse is distinguished by the, 'inability of civil society to rebound' (Zartman 1995: 8).

Civil society's reaction to this process of collapse can best be seen in theoretical terms, by using Azarya and Chazan's concept of incorporation and disengagement (Azarya 1988, Chazan 1988). Chazan argues that links between the state and civil society vacillate along a range between incorporation and disengagement. Incorporation is the process whereby large segments of the population associate with the state and take part in its activities in order to share its resources. Disengagement is the tendency to withdraw from the state and keep at a distance from its channels as a hedge against its instability and dwindling resource base.

The usefulness of this concept is that the process in many CPEs seems to be an extreme case of disengagement. Prior to the collapse of the state the rampant abuses of state power carried out by authoritarian regimes led to an extreme process of disengagement. This manifests itself in a number of processes which are clearly seen in CPEs:

1. Retreat into a parallel economy (subsistence and/or black market).
2. Traditional structures and authority regain force as familiar bases in which people seek protection from the instability and arbitrariness of state channels.
3. Narrower bases of communal solidarity (village, family, ethnic, religious) are reinforced (Azarya 1988: 8).

Some of these processes, especially parallel markets, do not entail complete retreat from the state, as Azarya notes they, 'depend partly on diverted state channels and would be hard to sustain without some form of official collusion' (Azarya 1988: 8). For example, in Zaire, Macgaffey found state officials using their authority to penetrate the parallel economy (Macgaffey 1988). Fatton makes the important point that withdrawal is unlikely to produce polities or economies that can stand as viable alternatives to the existing state domain (Fatton 1992).

In considering these processes it is interesting to refer back to section 3.3 which distinguished between the different sectors of civil society. What seems to survive in CPEs are those areas of civil society that are traditional, ascriptive, informal and distant from the state. The collapsing state seems to take with it the larger, more formal and closely linked organisations leaving people to fall back on more traditional and ascriptive ties. For example, in Afghanistan civil society has become intensely segmented, with people's loyalties becoming directed to family, clan and lineage rather than the community (Goodhand and Chamberlain 1996). This has important implications for the gender specific impact of conflict on civil society as these ascriptive institutions are often highly patriarchal.

### ***How is civil society affected during CPEs?***

This section will examine how civil society is undermined and contested during CPEs. The collapse of a centralised state does not mean that the processes of disengagement noted above are complete and that civil society can be seen as completely independent.

Even in the most extreme cases of state collapse, such as Somalia and Liberia, local authorities still perform some of the functions of the state, albeit in a more limited and often predatory form. For example, in Chad Nolutshungu found that power devolved to armed groups that, in some cases and to some degree, performed some of the functions of states in the localities where they had military predominance (Nolutshungu 1996). These local authorities simultaneously attack civil society, as part of their military strategies, and contest the processes of disengagement in attempts to use civil society to mobilise support and resources.

The first point to be drawn from the theory on civil society is that civil society is vulnerable to breakdowns resulting from deprivation. As Azarya argues, ‘a general problem of civility is that it tends to break down under conditions of extreme scarcity’ (Azarya 1994: 90). He claims that when resources are scarce immediate needs take precedence over consideration of any social contract which recognises the rights of others. This tendency is seen in the literature on coping strategies in periods of natural disaster, which finds the moral economy of exchange breaking down during prolonged periods of stress and scarcity. Davies found that in Mali, people repeatedly reported the breakdown of traditional reciprocal arrangements which were essentially welfarist during periods of prolonged livelihood vulnerability (Davies 1996). This, however, is only part of the story and the moral economy has been found to be surprisingly resilient in the face of famine. Adams found that, ‘social strategies and institutions in rural Mali are not merely passive structures upon which drought and famine have a disruptive effect’ (Adams 1993: 49).

CPEs, however, are especially destructive of the moral economy which usually serves as a crucial component of household coping strategies during periods of scarcity. The moral economy, defined by Swift (1989) as, ‘the range of redistributive processes which occur within communities’, is clearly closely related to the norms of trust in social capital and Chazan’s primary groupings within civil society discussed in section 3. War impacts on moral economies in three main ways. Firstly, displacement splits up families and communities and takes individuals away from a context in which they can draw on reciprocal networks. Secondly, the looting of assets results in an overall lack of resources within communities, which undermines exchange networks. If even the wealthier members of a community have been subject to looting they are less likely to be able to assist weaker and poorer members. Thirdly, military strategies of exemplary terror, such as dehumanising acts of torture and mutilation targeted at families and communities, results in the destruction of the social fabric that is the basis for the moral economy.

Women are often the targets of rape and sexual violence and Byrne (1995: 27) notes that these, ‘appear to be universal and widespread characteristics of warfare.’ She argues that sexual violence appears to be both a result of general breakdowns of law and order, but also the result of a policy to demoralise the community. Indeed, the purpose of these military tactics seems to be to attack and undermine social capital and civil society. Otherwise they make little sense and appear as acts of random brutality and meaningless



violence. As De Waal argues destabilisation through acts of violence can, 'create a climate of mistrust and turn a community against itself' (De Waal 1996: 14). He argues that the purpose of Renamo's graphic mutilation of captives in Mozambique was to undermine the citizen's sense of security. The aim is to destabilise areas and communities that are seen as opposed to the faction carrying out the violence. These tactics create legacies of embitterment and suspicion, that are the opposite of the relationships of trust and confidence vital to social capital. For example, Marcus (1995) found that, 'Cambodian social networks and family networks have broken down, or at least been seriously impaired, by decades of conflict and particularly by the Khmer Rouge regime.

It is, however, possible to reverse this argument and envisage that community solidarity could be strengthened by such onslaughts. In Sierra Leone, Richards (1996), cites the example of the defence of a town called Bo through citizen action and the formation of a self defence militia. Another example of civil society organising in its own defence is in Ikanga, Kenya where participatory methods introduced by ACTIONAID were used to select guards to provide security against banditry (Harvey 1997b). These are indications that new community organisations can emerge in response to external threats and are evidence of the continuing strength of civil society, despite attempts to undermine or control it.

Civil society is further undermined by the continued manipulation of ethnic identities noted in section 4.21. Adams and Bradbury argue that this process hardens differences between ethnic groups and destroys long standing reciprocal relations (1995). Remaining local authorities attempt to mobilise support and create neo-patrimonial ties, based on clientelism, ethnicity and kinship. The disengagement process, of retreating to traditional authority structures, is, therefore, contested. The fragmentation of militias in both Liberia and Somalia was based on clan and tribal allegiances. Similarly, in south Sudan rebel groups have splintered along ethnic lines.

Retreat into a parallel economy is another process of disengagement that continues to be contested by remaining local authorities. Militia leaders need the profits generated from engagement in the parallel economy to sustain their military efforts. For example, in Liberia, Taylor's control of Greater Liberia was based on an extensive commercial network, with its own currency and banking system. Exports of diamonds and timber continued during the worst of the fighting and enabled Taylor to finance his political and military networks (Reno 1995). Similar commercial networks sustain the political economy of militias in Somalia. The khat trade (a mild narcotic widely chewed in Somalia) is one of the mainstays of militias and it is estimated that the Somali trade yields over \$100 million annually. One of the main merchants involved in the trade was Aideed's finance minister (Lewis 1993).

Finally, it is important to realise that although civil society is undermined and contested during CPEs, this is only part of the story. Despite attacks on it, and attempts to control and subvert it by warring parties, civil society institutions and organisations continue to exist and indeed to thrive at a local level. As Zartman argues, 'authority structures around elders, traditional conflict management procedures, active trading networks and inventive community operations grow up to fill local vacuums' (Zartman 1995: 268).

This is reflected in the continuing strength of traditional institutions that, despite being weakened, continue to provide a degree of social stability. For example, in Afghanistan, UNDP has found that 'shuras', councils

of village men that resolve disputes and govern daily life at the village level, have provided some stability. As Sultan Aziz argues, 'there are few things left that the Afghans trust anymore. But they trust the shuras.' (Meier 1997: 12). Religion is another institution that we see societies turning towards, as witnessed by the emergence of the Taliban in Afghanistan and fundamentalist Islamic organisations in Somalia. The rise of these religious organisations reinforces the point that emergent civil society groups can be civil or uncivil, depending on your perspective, and a complex mixture of the modern and the traditional.

The resilience of civil society also reflected in the continued strength of the parallel economy. For example, Richards (1996) found women from Bo in central Sierra Leone trading palm oil from the rebel ringed plantation areas, having discovered ways to handle the complex checkpoint culture of the conflict zone. He argues that this resilience of commerce, 'may be one of the most important processes through which the civil agrarian zones in war-torn Sierra Leone get back on their feet and extend peace from within' (Richards 1996: 156).

The picture that emerges, therefore, defies simple characterisation. Civil society is simultaneously emerging, being undermined, and contested, in ongoing CPEs. This suggests that the task for rebuilding civil society is far more complicated than simply working through local institutions. CPEs undermine social capital and there is a need to rebuild social relationships, trust and confidence as a first step.

### ***How to theorise about civil society in the absence of a national government?***

This raises the question of how to theorise about civil society in the absence of a national government. The theories of civil society discussed in chapter 3 all define the concept in relation to the state, and argue that the state plays a crucial role in the development of civil society.

Three things make it possible to continue to talk about civil society and employ it as a useful analytical category, even during state collapse. Firstly, during CPEs there continue to be local authorities that fulfil at least some state functions. Secondly, local authorities contest the space of civil society by manipulating ethnic identities and moving into the parallel economy. Thirdly, these local authorities are often directly predatory on civil society.

It is, however, necessary to consider theoretically, the ways in which civil society's interactions with the state might change when a conventional national state is decaying or ceases to exist. In collapsed states the roles for civil society and the state presented in section three obviously change. A start in theorising how these roles might change is shown below in a series of propositions.

Firstly, it is possible to envisage a number of positive contributions that different parts of civil society could make to a process of recovery. For the sake of brevity and simplicity civil society here is presented as a homogenous entity. In reality, a complex network of civil society institutions and organisations would be fulfilling these roles.

- Civil society may be able to provide a counter balance to the power of predatory local authorities and by doing this put pressure on them to show more respect for their role in providing law and order.

- Civil society may provide basic services in the absence of the state.
- Civil society, by providing services, can begin to build up governance capacity at the local level.
- Civil society can help to create demand for better governance by showing that developmental initiatives are possible.

However, the ability of civil society to play these positive roles is likely to be constrained by a number of potential weaknesses.

- Civil society is not independent from predatory local authorities - just as states penetrate civil society so do warlords.
- Civil society's ability to provide basic services is likely to be dependent on outside resources.
- Civil society has been severely weakened during state collapse and war and this is likely to limit its absorptive capacity.
- As there is no state to provide a protective framework civil society is vulnerable to conflict, insecurity and attack from predatory authorities.

These propositions around civil society's role in a CPE will be examined in more detail and tested in the case study of civil society and rehabilitation in Somalia.

### **4.3 Conclusion**

This section has traced a number of inter-linked processes impacting on civil society during CPEs

1. An extreme process of the disengagement of civil society from the state.
2. A fallback on primary groupings within civil society. Kinship, tribal, religious and traditional political structures serve as coping strategies of people in response to state collapse.
3. Military strategies, extreme scarcity and displacement serve to undermine civil society.
4. Predatory local authorities continue to contest the space of civil society, moving into the parallel economy and attempting to create support by drawing on neo-patrimonial ties based on ethnicity.
5. The continued strength of civil society at a local level, both in the parallel economy and of traditional institutions.

These processes have a number of important implications for an approach to rehabilitation that focuses on civil society. Civil society in CPEs emerges as a contested arena, that is not as independent from the state as suggested in the development literature or the emerging narrative. Therefore, the hope that building civil

society will marginalise warlords, is likely to be problematic and there is a need examine the accommodations civil society organisations have to make with local authorities.

The weakness of civil society during and after CPEs is likely to affect the capability and absorptive capacity of remaining civil society institutions. This suggests the need to move slowly in capacity building initiatives and that there could be a danger of overwhelming institutions, by providing too many resources too quickly.

The tendency for people to fallback on the traditional primary groups identified in section three raises several questions. It suggests that thought needs to be given about whether to work with these groups or to try and encourage new organisations. This is likely to depend on the types of projects being implemented. Traditional institutions, such as elders in Somalia, may be suited to conflict resolution but not to service delivery, which requires more formal organisations. Ascriptive institutions are often highly patriarchal and working with them may result in the neglect of important gender issues and the marginalisation of women from the rehabilitation process.

Finally, the picture of civil society in CPEs that emerges from this analysis is far more complex and contradictory than the simple point that CPEs are destructive of civil society, generally made in the literature. This suggests that rebuilding civil society is likely to be a more difficult task than is implied by the emerging narrative. It will necessitate international agencies engaging with complex political processes, that we suggested in section 2 they may be trying to avoid.

## **5 REHABILITATION**

Rehabilitation is a field which has grown rapidly since the mid 1980s, in terms of money spent, scope and geographical coverage. The growing interest in rehabilitation has emerged in part because of the growing importance of emergency aid as a percentage of all aid flows. In the past fifteen years it has grown from 1% to nearly 10% of all aid flows. DAC estimates that in the last few years average annual expenditure on humanitarian emergencies has been \$8 to 10 billion (DAC 1997).

Rehabilitation has traditionally been seen as a transitional step on the relief - development continuum. The value of rehabilitation is said to lie in helping to bridge an uneasy transition between relief and development (Greater Horn of Africa Initiative 1994). This neat linear sequence, however, has increasingly been seen as problematic and in practice many development agencies find themselves simultaneously engaged in relief, rehabilitation and development. This can be problematic, however, if donor funding is restricted to emergency relief, or if agencies in the field are faced with a plethora of different funding windows. Another problem is that donor fatigue may lead to resources drying up during critical transition periods.

The range of rehabilitation options is set out in figure 5 under three main headings of economic, political and social assistance. It also distinguishes between work carried out at the household level, and that carried out at community, district, national and international levels. The matrix is filled in with examples of the types of rehabilitation projects that are carried out at the various levels. Inevitably the boundaries between all these various categories are blurred and some of the areas which have been portrayed as separate are

really cross cutting issues, notably social capital / civil society building. The figure illustrates the comprehensive nature of the rehabilitation toolbox.

**Figure 5: The rehabilitation spectrum**

Level	Type of rehabilitation														
	Political					Economic					Social				
	Electoral reform	Human rights	Conflict Resolution	Demobilisation, disarmament and Security	Government capacity building	Macro-economic reform	Demining	Agricultural production and environment	Income generation market access	Physical infrastructure	Refugees and displaced	Social infrastructure and services	Vulnerable group assistance	Gender projects	Social capital building
Household				Cash or in-kind grants Training				Seeds Tools Restock-ing	Income generation projects Credit	Shelter Housing	Psycho-social counselling Seeds tools		Income transfers Food distribution	Support for sexually abused	
Community			Training community leaders					Irrigation Grain Banks Environment projects	Public Works FFW & CFW	Sewage Water		Schools health centres training EPI	Feeding projects	Support to womens groups	Support for football teams Local NGOs Elders
District		Potential for cooperation with other INGOs	Support for traditional mechanisms	Support for police forces	Support to local government		Mine removal	Extension Veterinary services EWS	Barter shops	Energy Telecom Roads		Regional hospitals			Encouragement for LINGO networking
Nation	Technical assistance in elections Monitors	Commissions Support to human rights organisations	Radio and other media services promoting peace		Salary support, training, technical assistance to ministries	Programme aid, liberalisation	Public awareness Build local capacity	Land rights and land reform		Airports	Repatriation programs Property rights				
International		PRODERE Potential for INGO lobbying	Greater Horn of Africa Initiative		PRODERE	Advocacy on structural adjustment					PRODERE				

## **5.1 Rehabilitation and complex emergencies**

Rehabilitation from CPEs presents a series of particular challenges for international agencies wishing to help societies recover from war. These are summarised below.

International agencies working in CPEs argue that it is possible to engage in rehabilitation even while conflict is still going on. Regions within a country or periods of comparative peace provide 'windows of opportunity' in which it is possible to consider rehabilitation (USAID 1995, Kapila and Winter 1995).

There are, however, problems with the idea that rehabilitation is possible in ongoing CPEs. Chief among these is the fear that engaging in rehabilitation may compromise the neutrality of relief assistance and confer legitimacy on predatory governments or authorities. Relief aid explicitly sets out to be neutral and donors have sought to achieve this by by-passing state institutions and disbursing funds through decentralised channels such as NGOs, rather than through state structures. Rehabilitation, by engaging with local institutions, may threaten this neutrality (Macrae et al 1997).

Related to this, is the point that humanitarian assistance may become caught up in the conflict and be subject to manipulation by warring parties. This has been particularly true of large scale projects, providing significant amounts of external resources. As USAID argued in their Integrated Strategic Plan for Somalia, 'concentration of resources has more often than not led to increased competition over control and manipulation of these resources' (1996: 10). Rehabilitation in ongoing CPEs may, therefore, need to focus on smaller scale and low cost interventions that are less likely to exacerbate or attract conflict.

Absorptive capacity is a particular constraint on rehabilitation in CPEs, where local institutions have been incapacitated and confidence and trust in social relations undermined by the effects of war. The danger to be avoided is one of trying to introduce large scale development projects before communities are ready. In Burundi, for example, one of the activities financed by Action Aid in conflict affected communities has been to sponsor local football teams, and in other ways to help rebuild social capital (Harvey, Maxwell and Campbell 1997).

Rehabilitation after conflict encompasses a much wider range of activities than those traditionally seen as central. De-mining, psycho-social work and conflict resolution are all examples of new areas being tackled by international agencies in rehabilitation programmes. In general the political and social aspects presented in the rehabilitation spectrum are more important in CPEs.

An important lesson of rehabilitation experience to date has been the importance of taking gender issues into account. Byrne and Baden conclude:

"From a gender perspective, rehabilitation provides an opportunity to build on the capacities of women which may have been extended by the crisis situation and to redress existing gender inequalities or disadvantage, which may have worsened under emergency conditions, by upholding women's rights and access to resources. It is crucial that women are not further disadvantaged in the process of rehabilitation, by being overlooked in the provision of education and training or when resources - such as seeds and tools - are distributed" (Byrne and Baden 1995: 31).

Reconstruction can be a key time for women, determining whether organisational, economic and productive skills, developed during the conflict will be built on, or whether the outcome will be an increase in their workloads and an undermining of their status. As Byrne notes, women are frequently excluded from the processes of skill building and organisational capacity building that take place during rehabilitation (Byrne 1995). In a review of agency experience and case studies of rehabilitation in Sudan, Ethiopia and Somalia it was found that gender issues were often neglected and sidelined (Harvey, Maxwell and Campbell 1997). A legacy of relief programming is that there are many institutional and other barriers to the implementation of a gender sensitive perspective in rehabilitation. For example, emergency staff are often male dominated, high staff turnover limits the effects of staff training and there may be opposition from beneficiary communities to policies that are perceived to challenge traditional structures. Byrne and Baden (1995) argue that involving women in consultation and giving them decision making power is perhaps the key element in a gender aware approach and that it is unacceptable to rely on community leaders (most often men) as the sole mechanism for consulting programme beneficiaries.

## **6 REHABILITATION AND CIVIL SOCIETY IN SOMALIA**

This section will take the issues explored in the earlier sections and examine them in the context of Somalia. It will look at civil society before the 1991 conflict (section 6.2), during the height of the conflict (section 6.3) and how it has developed since then (section 6.4). These developments will be linked into the challenges facing rehabilitation in Somalia. First, however, we provide a brief political and economic background (section 6.1).

### **6.1 Political and economic background**

Somalia is a clear example of a CPE. The overthrow of the government in 1991 led to civil war, which combined with drought and mass displacement, caused widespread loss of life. In response to the famine a US led intervention force began a peace keeping operation in December 1992. However, in 1993 UNOSOM itself became embroiled in the ongoing conflict, as it launched failed attacks on one of the main militia leaders, General Aideed. The death of US troops during this period led to their withdrawal and replacement with a multi-national force, which itself withdrew in 1995. A chronology which summarises the main events during and after the crisis is presented below and a map enclosed as appendix 1.



### Box 1: Somalia Chronology

- June 1960 British Somaliland became independent
- July 1960 Italian Somalia became independent and joined with Somaliland to form the Somalia Republic
- 1969 General Mohamed Siyad Barre overthrows a civilian government in a military coup. Somalia embraces 'scientific socialism' with USSR assistance.
- 1977/78 Somalia-Ethiopian war. Soviet Union changed sides to aid Ethiopia, and was replaced in Somalia by the USA.
- 1990 Barre's divide and rule policies, arming his allies to suppress his enemies, leads to general militarisation and collapse of the state.
- January 1991 Barre overthrown by United Somali Congress guerrillas and chased out of Mogadishu by USC leader, General Aideed.
- May 1991 The Somali National Movement declares the 'Somaliland Republic' independent of Somalia
- 1992 Continuing conflict in southern Somalia between faction leaders and famine
- December 1992 US led operation involving 30,000 troops begins a peace-keeping role in Somalia
- June 1993 24 Pakistani soldiers killed. Attacks launched by UNOSOM on Aideed strongholds in Mogadishu
- March 1995 UN troops withdraw from Somalia

Somalia today consists of three distinct politico-geographic zones, characterised by different levels of insecurity and governance. The Northwest, the self proclaimed Somaliland, has a fragile government beset by occasional clan based, low intensity civil conflict. While extremely limited in capacity the Somaliland government does have functioning ministries and paid government staff. This has enabled international agencies to work with the government in rehabilitation activities. For instance, the International Rescue Committee (IRC) works with the Ministry of Agriculture in an agricultural extension project. Relatively large scale rehabilitation projects have also been possible. For example, a \$1.2 million EU-funded rehabilitation programme for the port of Berbera is underway. As Green argues, 'the Northwest does have civil governance capacity - based on a paid, structured, professional civil service - not merely different in kind to anything in Somalia but with greater capacity and more potential than that of several other SSA countries' (Green 1995b: 54).

The north-east, the home of the Mijerteen subclan of the Darod clan, has been the most peaceful zone since the fall of Barre's regime. Bossaso itself, the main town in the region, is booming economically. Growth is based on the port (which has increased trade due to the closure of Mogadishu port) and on an influx of newcomers avoiding conflict in other parts of Somalia. The collapse of the Bossaso based regional

administration, early in 1997, however, means that little progress has been made in building a level of governance capacity.

Much of central and southern Somalia provides a sharp contrast. Mogadishu, Lower Shabelle, Bay region, the Middle and Lower Juba regions, including Kismayo and Gedo region retain all the characteristics of a complex political emergency: disputed political authority, sporadic armed conflict, lack of a functional administration, large scale population displacement and an economy of plunder. Pockets of central and southern Somalia such as Hiran region are, however, relatively stable and do have emerging local administrative structures.

Somalia, therefore, manifests three distinct regional trends, each of which poses different types of challenges for rehabilitation. These can be divided into regions experiencing recovery; regions experiencing crisis and regions in a state of transition. In some areas, nascent regional and inter-regional polities are emerging to provide their communities with a modicum of stability, security, basic services and governance and an environment has been created in which local production is reviving and trade expanding. Much of central and southern Somalia, however, is characterised by continuing lawlessness, instability, destitution and extortion. In terms of the distinction made in section four, it is characterised by a high degree of predatoriness.

### ***Economy***

The civil war and its aftermath has largely destroyed Somalia's rudimentary industrial base, caused widespread damage to infrastructure and has sporadically disrupted trade patterns. The informal economy, however, has coped with war with surprising resilience. Informal export of live animals to the Gulf and remittances from the Somali diaspora retain their pre-war status as the mainstay of the informal economy and as a means of survival for the bulk of the war-affected society. The economy is fairly dormant in central and southern Somalia, but there has been significant economic growth in the north east and Somaliland.

In central and southern Somalia, the agricultural sector since 1993 has begun to make some progress towards recovery, showing increasing crop yields and significant export levels of citrus fruits. Food security, however, remains a problem. Vulnerability to drought remains and small-scale farming is sporadically disrupted by fighting and looting by armed militias. The production of bananas has become increasingly controlled by wealthy individuals, fostering banana wars between powerful individuals protected by local militia leaders and tied to external commercial interests.

In the north east and Somaliland inter-regional trade and livestock exports are expanding and new businesses are being launched. Livestock exports through Berbera alone are worth an estimated US\$80 million per annum. There is also a brisk import trade as Somali businesses based in Djibouti and the Arabian peninsula provide consumer goods. In both the north-east and Somaliland there is a growing service economy with private businesses providing services such as international telecommunications and electricity.

Throughout the country private provision of education and health through private schools and pharmacies is emerging. Overall, Somalia's largely informal economy has proven remarkably resilient, proving an

engine for reconstruction and an incentive to reconciliation. But control over the profitable assets continues to be a source of political and military conflict in many parts of the country.

The emergence in some parts of the country of local administrative structures, relative peace and a growing economy provide significant opportunities for rehabilitation. The north-east and Somaliland are clearly ‘windows of opportunity’. In central and southern Somalia the challenge is more to take advantage of those areas that have remained relatively peaceful and to find ways of operating in an insecure environment.

## **6.2 Civil society before 1991**

Between 1969 and 1991 Somalia was governed by Siyad Barre, an authoritarian and tyrannical ruler who relied largely on military force to sustain his rule. During this period government was extremely centralised and the growth of civil society heavily restricted. The political system created by Barre can perhaps best be analysed in terms of neo-patrimonialism and clientelism. Clapham sees neo-patrimonialism as characterised by the following features:

- the inflation of state apparatus to appropriate and allocate resources.
- large armed forces.
- legal structures for popular participation and representation neutralised.
- extraction of rural surpluses via state monopolised circuits (Clapham 1982).

These features were certainly present in Somalia under Barre. Siyad built the army into one of the largest in sub-Saharan Africa. In 1982 it was 120,000 strong and Adam describes it as a ‘huge army of repression’ (Adam 1995: 71). Barre also utilised clientelism in appointing loyal political agents to guide and control civil institutions and the state monopolised official economic activity. Appointments were based on largely on ethnicity and personal loyalty, with three clans from the Darod family dominant. Barre also created clan based organisations such as Hangash, a military intelligence unit.

This highly centralised and personalised state apparatus meant that civil society independent from the state was significantly constrained. At the community level, the only organisations allowed to function were co-operatives and women’s and youth groups, and these were closely controlled by the government. Traditional clan based institutions such as the elders at village level remained and, by virtue of their central role in Somali society, maintained some independence and legitimacy. Clan based identities, however, were brutally manipulated by Barre’s regime. This is a good example of the need for a Gramscian perspective suggested in section 3, with the state attempting to control and manipulate civil society. Adam describes his tactics as ‘brutal divide and rule’, first using the army to conduct punitive raids against clans seen as opposed to the regime and then arming so-called loyal clans and encouraging them to wage wars against “rebel” clans (Adam 1995: 73). Adam argues that the damage caused by this elite manipulation of clan consciousness contributed to the inability of civil society to rebound when Siyad fell from power. Tactics of exemplary terror and destabilisation discussed in section 4 were also used by Barre. During the late 1980s he conducted bombing campaigns in north west Somalia (Somaliland), destroyed water reservoirs vital to

nomads in enemy territory, indiscriminately jailed opponents and utilised terror squads and assassination units.

Another factor shaping the development of civil society has been the history of international assistance in Somalia. Since the 1960s, international assistance has been marked by lack of accountability and a top down focus. In the 1970s, Somalia's position as a pawn in Cold War politics meant that Russian assistance in the 1970s and Western assistance in the 1980s was characterised by lack of accountability. In the 1980s, the soft target for aid was the large amounts of humanitarian aid for Ethiopian refugees which was widely diverted and abused. The lack of independent civil society organisations meant that most international aid was channelled through the government. For Somalis at the community level this meant that aid was associated with the discredited public sector and that participation in development projects was extremely limited.

The lack of an associational network independent to the state is illustrated by the history of NGOs in Somalia. Before the civil war, very few organisations were officially registered with the government as NGOs. They first appeared in the early 1980s, in the wake of international aid agencies that rushed in to help with the huge influx of Ethiopian refugees as a result of the 1977-78 Ogaden war. As the international agencies began to withdraw, local NGOs increased in number and implemented projects mainly in the health and income generating sector. The majority were based in Mogadishu. The idea of NGOs was so new and perplexing to the Somali government that it had to resort to a charity law from the Italian colonial period to register the first ones. Two things are worth noting about this: first, that the idea of NGOs was new and NGOs were only beginning to emerge when the civil war broke out; and secondly, that the impetus for their formation was a major relief initiative. Even before the 1991/92 crisis, NGOs were modelling themselves on international relief agencies rather than emerging with a concern for longer term developmental initiatives.

To summarise, the following points about civil society before 1991 should be noted:

- civil society was weak and suppressed.
- opposition to the regime had been forced into armed opposition and into clan based militias.
- attitudes of suspicion and mistrust towards the public sector and aid had developed.
- exemplary terror and clan based warfare had led to the weakening of social capital and civil society

### **6.3 Civil society during the CPE**

The processes of disengagement discussed in section four can be clearly seen in Somalia during 1991 and 1992. Chazan's argument, that traditional structures and authority regain force as familiar bases to seek protection from instability, can be seen in the utilisation of the clan system and kinship ties during the emergency. A common response to the fighting since 1991 has been for Somalis to return to their home areas where kinship ties can provide some support and security. As the War Torn Societies Project (WTSP) argues, these ties:

‘have served for many Somalis as a guarantee of security and protection from violence and upheaval. The segmentary social system of the Somalis has arguably done more than any other factor to mitigate the ravages of civil war and state collapse: clan territories have offered safe haven to the uprooted and displaced; moral and material support has been placed at the disposal of those in distress’ (War Torn Societies Project 1997: 5)

However, these traditional civil society institutions have not only played a positive role. As we argued in section four, civil society is a contested space and in Somalia the armed militia factions have drawn on clan based identities to mobilise support. As the WTSP argues, this generates a paradoxical situation in which clan loyalties have served to generate hostility and violence, but these same ties have also provided mutual support and helped to regulate social behaviour in the absence of a government.

Chazan’s third process of disengagement, retreat into a parallel economy, can be seen in Somalia in the resilience, and in some places resurgence, of the informal economy. Again, however, this is a contested arena and certainly not the sole preserve of an independent civil society. The militias have made determined efforts to control and profit from the informal economy. The banana wars between rival exporters supported by local militia groups are a good example. Militias also control the lucrative khat trade. Green estimated that Aideed controlled at least \$20 million a year in 1995 through control of khat imports and fruit exports (Green 1995).

The more blatantly predatory behaviour of militias also impacted on civil society during the emergency. From December 1991 to March 1992 the south suffered almost continual warfare. The coastal towns of Merca, Brava and Kismayo and the inland towns of Baidoa and Bardera suffered waves of attacks by the undisciplined fighters of militia groups. Mass executions, destruction of agricultural land, looting of grain stores and livestock, destruction of water supplies and homes led to massive displacement and widespread starvation. The minority Bantu tribes were particularly vulnerable and suffered the brunt of the famine in 1991 and 1992 (African Rights 1993). Gender-specific human rights abuses took the form of rape and forced marriages and most at risk were women who lacked the protection of powerful clan structures or who belong to ethnic minorities (Power-Stevens 1995). As discussed in section 4 these military tactics serve to undermine civil society and social capital.

The immediate aftermath to the overthrow of Siyad Barre, however, produced what De Waal describes as, ‘a rapid proliferation of civic organisations, enjoying the first freedom from authoritarian government for more than two decades’ (De Waal 1994: 143). This brief flowering of civil society was, however, quickly stifled by the factional fighting between the clan based militias who had overthrown Barre and then the massive influx of international aid agencies with UNOSOM, which marginalised and incapacitated local institutions.

As an example of this brief flowering De Waal cites Peace Aid Somalia, a local organisation set up in Kismayo by a group of business people and intellectuals in August 1991. It raised its initial funds by the members selling some of their personal possessions such as jewellery; later it raised money from the

community, focusing on traders and still later was supported by the ICRC. The organisation provided support to six camps for the displaced in and around Kismayo. This local initiative was stopped in its tracks when the SNA captured the town in May 1992. Many of its leaders were forced to flee to Kenya and others went into hiding (De Waal 1994).

The UNOSOM intervention also impeded the development of civil society. The incapacitating effects of international relief on local institutions have been discussed in other contexts. Hubbard noted how relief in Western Sudan in 1984/85 marginalised and excluded local government (Hubbard 1991). International agencies in 1993 were generally preoccupied with logistics and the movement of food and provided relief directly, ignoring local institutions. De Waal contrasts the UN operation with the ICRC feeding programme that went on before the US intervention, which he argues was far more successful. A key to its success was the intimate linkage between the international agency and local partners. The Somali Red Crescent Society (SRCS) provided a partner organisation with a body of committed Somali staff.

#### **6.4 Civil society and recovery**

The development of civil society since 1992 has seen several parallel processes. Firstly, the continuing importance of traditional clan based elders and their involvement in local level conflict resolution. This is seen most clearly in the north east and Somaliland. In southern Somalia political initiatives have been less positive but have still led to the emergence of local administrative structures. Secondly, the UNOSOM intervention, which has complicated any transition from relief to development and contributed to a mushrooming of local NGOs in southern Somalia. Finally ongoing conflict continues to undermine civil society initiatives.

##### ***Civil society and politics***

Fallback on the traditional political institution of elders at the height of the emergency, led to them taking a more enhanced political role after 1992. Especially in the relatively peaceful areas of the north east and Somaliland, elders played a key role in negotiating peace accords and developing some civil governance capacity. This process has been hailed by some writers as an example of an indigenous grassroots approach to conflict resolution that the international community could support (Farah and Lewis 1993). Bradbury describes it as a, 'bottom-up approach where people rebuild their relations of trust and cooperation from the grassroots' and contrasts it to a top down approach that recognises the legitimacy of warring parties (Bradbury 1993: 88). However the circumstances that enabled the elders to play a key role in the north east and Somaliland are not present in southern Somalia, suggesting that the wider applicability of this model may be limited.

The Boroma conference held in Somaliland in 1993 is an example of how traditional civil society institutions have contributed to a process of conflict resolution. It was held to resolve fighting that had broken out after the declaration of Somaliland independence in 1991. The conference was attended by 150 voting delegates, comprising delegates from all clans in Somaliland. They were accompanied by a further 150 observers and advisers. During the 4 month conference an estimated 2000 people participated at

different stages. It had two agenda items, reconciliation and security, and state formation. It produced a National Peace Charter that detailed mechanisms for the registration and storage of weapons, the demobilisation of militia, disarming of bandits, formation of local police forces and judicial institutions and the securing of roads. The discussions on state formation produced a National Charter which set out a transitional structure for the government of Somaliland for the next 2 years. As Bradbury argues, 'the Boroma conference was an impressive example of an indigenous Somali reconciliation process in practice, in which the responsibilities of elders as mediators in the internal affairs of communities are clearly displayed' (Bradbury 1993: 74). Another example is the Sanaag conference in the north east, which like the Boroma conference was led by traditional elders and focused on resolving clan conflicts. Religious leaders and a Somali NGO also played important roles.

One of the key features of these internal conferences is that they were indigenously led, which limits the role for international assistance. International agencies did, however, provide some support. ACTIONAID and the Life and Peace Institute contributed some funds which were used for food, blankets and utensils. What this suggests, is that outsiders cannot initiate such a process, but may be able to support and encourage it once it is underway.

However, the positive role played by the elders was only made possible by the political and military circumstances in the north east and Somaliland. Both these regions are more homogeneous than southern Somalia, with one major clan dominant and one clan based militia having military control. These militias were supportive of the elders peace initiatives partly because they did not threaten their control. Therefore, while these peace conferences are promising examples of a bottom up approach to peace building, they do not necessarily provide a blueprint for southern Somalia, where the circumstances are different. Another weakness of this 'bottom-up approach' is that the reconciliation conferences remained male dominated activities in which women did not take a direct role (Power-Stevens 1995). According to Farah (1993), northern Somali women enthusiastically supported local forums but this support was confined to providing traditional domestic services. This supports the point made in section 4 that traditional institutions within civil society are often highly patriarchal. In more general terms, the increasing importance and consolidation in positions of power of traditional elders, obscures women's participation in decision making processes at the community level, as elders are exclusively men (Power-Stevens 1995).

In southern Somalia, grassroots political developments have been more fragmented, and less successful in creating peace or governance capacity. As Prendergast and Menkhaus argue, the most significant feature of the Somali political landscape has been the, 'radical localisation of [Somalia's] politics' (1995: 47).

UNOSOM, after 1994, pursued what it described as a bottom up approach to political reconciliation. It aimed to create a network of district and regional councils to provide some local level governance capacity independent of the clan based militias. These, however, largely failed to survive UNOSOM's departure. In most cases, they have been marginalised, rejected as an external imposition or sidelined because they threatened existing interests (Prendergast 1997). Bradbury found that they were seen as imposed from outside and argued that the speed at which the project was implemented gave no time for genuine local reconciliation. (Bradbury 1993).

Indigenous local administrative structures are, however, beginning to appear in southern Somalia. Dynamic and diverse polities have emerged at the local level, beneath the level of the various militia factions. Local communities have adapted to the collapse of the state by developing a variety of informal systems that provide minimal functions of day to day governance. These local level authority structures are largely traditional forms that bring together the elders, merchants and religious leaders of a clan, combined with the vestiges of modern administrative structures promoted by the UN. These clan based authorities were found by Human Rights Watch to have restored a degree of protection for local communities from gross abuses by rival militias (Human Rights watch Africa 1995).

A variety of local institutions and organisations have emerged from this process. In some areas Islamic courts have imposed a degree of law and order by imposing sharia law on offenders. Some communities have developed their own self defence militias which provide a degree of protection from the standing armies of warleaders, rival militia groups and bandit gangs. The business community has helped to create the thriving informal economy described in section 7.1 and could also be described as a local institution, although they do not generally have formal organisations. In Bossaso, however, there is a Chamber of Commerce that has received some support from the Mid Yorkshire Chamber of Commerce.

The breakdown of Somali society as a result of the conflict led to an increased participation or visibility of women in the economic arena, especially in petty trading. Traditionally, social relations in Somali society were based around kinship and a pastoral way of life. They are patriarchal and a rigid sexual division of labour exists. Women's increased economic role during the conflict has led to a level of respect for the important role women are playing in meeting the economic burden of supporting the family. Recognition of women's increased burdens has not, however, produced progressive change in gender relations. Simultaneously, there has been a rise in traditional and conservative attitudes towards women. Women, however, have established new social networks, particularly pooling resources and labour. Women's groups are common throughout Somalia and often focus on income generating activities. For example, in 1993, a Baidoa women's organisation established a cooperative to create employment for women in the town, which consisted of 65 women participating in training and income-generating activities. As Prendergast and Menkhaus (1995) argue, it is impossible to make generalisations about these emerging polities. Their legitimacy is fluid and prone to change.

### ***Aid and civil society***

The negative attitudes towards aid at the community level, produced by the nature of development assistance before 1991, were compounded by the massive relief assistance provided during the UNOSOM period. Much of the assistance was top down, external and delivered with little concern for community participation. The way in which aid has been delivered in Somalia has created a series of expectations about assistance and these expectations have created ways of interacting with outsiders attempts to provide assistance. These are summarised in box 3 below which is based on interviews and personal experience.



### **Box 3: Expectations about international assistance**

- that it is free.
- that it is imposed from outside with little concern for community priorities.
- that it is easily and frequently abused and diverted.
- that it is short term and fickle.
- that communities receive more if they portray themselves as helpless and vulnerable.

Ways of interacting with outside assistance:

- to maximise short term gains in the expectation that it will not last.
- to tell outside agencies what communities perceive they want to hear.
- to ask for as much as possible.
- to expect it to disappear.
- to expect that it will be diverted and to try and get a slice of the cake.

These expectations, and tactics for dealing with them, are frequently characterised as relief dependency. Somalis, however, have been extremely resourceful in developing strategies for dealing with adversity and, since 1992, private enterprise has flourished in many parts of the country. It is only in relation to outside assistance that communities have adopted attitudes of passivity. Hence a major challenge in moving from relief to development is to shift these entrenched attitudes.

UNOSOM attempted to address these problems by working with local institutions. In 1992 and 1993, UNOSOM and other UN agencies announced that they would fund LNGOs to implement basic relief and rehabilitation programmes. As noted above, the concept of NGOs was largely new in Somalia, but with funds available, the idea was quickly adopted. The result was a sudden mushrooming of NGOs. In Mogadishu, they numbered in the thousands and even in a small town such as Luuq there were over 60 NGOs by 1994. Many of these were little more than a few individuals with little capacity or experience and a primary concern with making money from the funds available. Corruption and diversion of funds were common. Funding was short term with a focus on projects such as food for work and rebuilding basic infrastructure such as schools or health posts. Accountability was limited and capacity building for the NGOs was rarely part of the process. Local NGOs were often described as business oriented or briefcase NGOs.

The result of this process was widespread suspicion of local NGO motives, both between the international community and LNGOs and between LNGOs and communities. Since the withdrawal of UNOSOM and a decline in available funding most of these NGOs have disappeared, but a legacy of suspicion remains. Those that have survived, however, generally have well qualified staff and some project experience. The people

who make up these LNGOs are usually professionally qualified people, who often worked with the government before the war, as it was virtually the only employer of middle class professionals.

International agencies have also tried to promote participation through the formation of community level organisations. For example, hospitals and schools supported by international agencies are encouraged to form hospital and education boards. As with LNGOs, however, these have been largely created in response to external demands and are seen primarily as a way of administering aid resources.

### ***Continuing conflict***

Since 1992, conflict and violence have continued to undermine civil society and it remains a vulnerable and contested space. For example, Human Rights Watch reported in 1995 that political murder of community leaders had become more common, sometimes apparently motivated by efforts at reconciliation led by traditional clan leaders. In February 1995, a sultan and nine other Degodia people were reportedly seized and slaughtered by Habr Gedir militia, apparently for having sought to promote reconciliation with other subclans. Their bodies were reportedly put on display by General Aideed's forces in Mogadishu (Human Rights Watch Africa 1995). This graphically illustrates the limits to bottom up peacebuilding in ongoing CPEs. Warring parties are unlikely to passively accept being marginalised. UNOSOM's civilian Somali employees were also targeted and intimidated by the warleaders' forces. They believed that this was due to their responsibility for the development of district councils which faction leaders saw as a potential threat. The vulnerable Bantu agricultural communities and Rahanweyne who bore the brunt of the famine in 1992 continue to be subject to raiding and land grabs.

These examples of continuing conflict and insecurity could be duplicated in most parts of southern Somalia. What they suggest is that supporting civil society as a tool for rehabilitation and reconstruction does not take place in a vacuum. If support for civil society threatens the interests of Somalia's powerful warleaders they are likely to respond violently. Similarly, support for the vulnerable and marginalised Bantu and Rahanweyne is unlikely to be accepted by more powerful groups attempting to force them off their land.

## **6.5 Conclusion**

These developments in civil society suggest that different roles are played by different institutions and organisations within civil society and that international agencies seeking to engage with these emerging processes should consider different tactics for dealing with different processes and priorities. As Prendergast argues, 'clan elders are almost always central players in clan reconciliation and conflict mediation, but they may not be the most effective or appropriate actors for managing and overseeing a demobilisation programme' (Prendergast 1997: 98). Box 5 below summarises the main roles different components of civil society have played.

### **Box 5: Roles played by various components of civil society in Somalia**

Clan elders	clan reconciliation and conflict mediation
LNGOs	development and rehabilitation projects
Islamic courts	dispute settlement
Local authorities	basic security
Hospital / education boards	running rudimentary social services
Business community	thriving informal economy
Women's groups	income generation / petty trading

The continuing conflict in southern Somalia further suggests that civil society cannot be seen as separate or independent. Agencies attempting to work with civil society will need to consider how their support interacts with local political and military realities. Ongoing conflict means that projects will remain vulnerable to security problems and prone to setbacks. Moving towards more developmental and participatory programming when attitudes towards aid are negative and suspicious, is likely to be a major challenge

## **7 CARE AND A CIVIL SOCIETY APPROACH TO REHABILITATION**

This section will examine in detail a CARE project which aimed to approach rehabilitation by working with civil society organisations. CARE has been operating a USAID funded Umbrella Grant Project in Somalia since 1993, now renamed as the Somalia Partnership Project (SPP). This project funds local and international NGOs to implement projects in the areas of health, income generation and agriculture. Institutional capacity building is seen by CARE as a vital element of the project and is addressed through training and technical support. CARE argues that, 'local NGOs have proven themselves to be a viable alternative towards positive change' (CARE 1996: 1). This chapter will focus on CARE's work with LNGOs, which is seen as the core of the programme.

This section is largely based on interviews with CARE staff. There were limited opportunities to cross check as much as would have been ideal and no independent evaluation of the project has yet been undertaken. However, interviews with other agencies, with CARE's LNGO partners and with beneficiaries, combined with my previous experience in Somalia, give me confidence that the description and analysis in this section provides an accurate picture. As the fieldwork was part of a consultancy for CARE I was obliged to focus on LNGOs and specific programming issues and some of the broader questions around civil society that arise, would require further research.

## **7.1 The Somalia Partnership Project**

### ***Approach***

After an NGO has been identified as a potential partner, CARE works extensively with the NGO to establish basic operational procedures within the organisation and to design a realistic proposal. This is done through frequent meetings with the NGO personnel to resolve concerns and to organise comprehensive strategies. The entire process takes, on average, 12 months.

Though this process is time consuming it has proven to be effective for NGOs that have had little previous developmental work experience. CARE learns more about the NGO; the NGO becomes immersed in the basic principles of development and has invested considerable time and energy into the project. NGOs which are not serious and committed often drop out after a brief period.

Institutional capacity building is addressed through a training programme, which aims to help the NGOs in the areas of organisational performance and in project implementation. Training begins in the proposal screening phase and continues during the project cycle. Workshops focus on the areas of management, technical capacity, finance and administration.

Assessment tools have been developed by CARE to measure progress towards capacity building. CARE has developed an Organisational Diagnostic (OD) Toolkit which is conducted with NGOs at the beginning of the funding cycle (baseline), mid term and end of the project. The OD toolkit measures the organisation's capacity in the areas of governance, finance, technical capacity and management and highlights strengths and weaknesses. Each of the four areas is scored and progress is tracked through the training programme.

Once a proposal has been accepted for funding, the process of implementation begins. CARE's efforts have focused on trying to achieve a degree of upwards financial and programmatic accountability. During the first two years of the project, the focus was more on getting as many projects started as possible, and CARE found that it had distributed too much money too quickly, without enough controls on how it was being spent, or the quality of programmes. In response to weaknesses identified in the first 2 years of the project, CARE made a number of changes and these are summarised in box 6.

#### **Box 6: Early problems faced by the SPP and CARE's response**

Early problems identified were:

- Too much money distributed too quickly to NGOs with limited capacity.
- CARE staff with limited experience.
- Lack of financial monitoring.
- Few program or field staff and so limited monitoring and evaluation capacity.
- Lack of baseline information to assist in monitoring and evaluating project impact.

The project has addressed these problems in the following ways:

- Technical review of all proposals considered for funding.
- External evaluation of all projects.
- More field staff and so greater monitoring capacity.
- A 3 person auditing team based in Somalia.
- Decentralised training..
- Smaller initial grants to LINGOs.
- Development of an Organisational Diagnostic (OD) toolkit to measure LINGO capacity.
- All NGOs conduct a baseline survey before starting implementation.

#### ***Achievements***

During the past three and a half years, the Umbrella Grant has funded a total of 37 projects (4 were terminated) and 28 NGOs. Of these 28 NGOs, 10 have been international and 18 local. To date, out of the 33 active or completed projects there have been 11 agricultural projects, seven water projects and seven credit / vocational training projects. As of March 1997 CARE had committed USD 7.045 million. Currently international NGOs account for 65% of project funding. This is because the amounts granted to INGOs are typically much larger. Average funding levels for LINGOs are around USD 70,000 for a one year period.

Simply keeping a program running in Somalia, given the recurrent security problems, is an achievement in itself. Determining which local NGOs should receive funding is a highly sensitive task that could easily have led to major security problems. In part this was achieved because the selection system set up by CARE has been perceived as fair and unbiased. Working through LINGOs, rather than implementing directly, also insulates CARE from many of the pressures facing other international agencies operating in Somalia, as day to day operational issues are dealt with by the LINGO. Also, because the level of resources provided to LINGOs is relatively small, they are less likely to attract conflict than more large scale programmes. This is not to imply that CARE is immune from insecurity and pressures from local authorities and militias, but that the way the project is structured has helped to minimise these risks.

Careful systems for financial reporting, monitoring and evaluation have also reduced the possibilities for misuse of funds and created enough safeguards that CARE can be reasonably confident of a basic level of

upwards accountability. The lengthy selection process has enabled the Umbrella Grant to gain a reputation as a funding source that only serious and committed NGOs should apply for. The training offered to LNGOs has created NGOs with enough capacity to develop, plan and implement simple projects.

CARE has also started a process of shifting attitudes from relief to development. The attitudes of the NGOs that CARE works with are beginning to shift from; 'just give us the money and let us provide free assistance to our helpless people' - a crude but broadly accurate representation of LNGO attitudes during the UNOSOM period. They are beginning to see both that they have a lot to learn and that developmental programming requires different ways of doing projects, notably more community participation. This in turn has started a process of lessening the suspicion with which Somali communities regard LNGOs. Previously, lack of accountability and widespread corruption, meant that for communities working with LNGOs was about demanding your slice of the cake. By implementing genuine projects that involve communities LNGOs are beginning to build up a measure of trust and respect. Trust, as we argued in the discussion in chapter 3 of social capital, is a central issue. Building trust between CARE and the NGOs it works with, and trust between LNGOs and communities, is a slow process, but at least a start has been made.

Although considerable, these achievements should not be exaggerated. CARE's LNGO partners still have limited organisational capacity, the projects being implemented are technically weak and problems with embezzlement still occur. What the project has done, is to lay a foundation of LNGOs, with enough basic capacity for the partnerships to develop over the next three years of the project. Problems with the project and challenges for the future are discussed in more detail below.

## **7.2 CARE's approach and civil society**

Training for NGOs has largely focused on their internal effectiveness and organisational development. The main stress of the project has therefore been on LNGOs upwards accountability to CARE and their own internal organisational effectiveness. This raises a number of questions about the role of LNGOs in civil society, problems with the way the project is currently structured and challenges for the future development of the SPP. These are:

- participation and downwards accountability
- role of LNGOs
- sustainability
- gender
- LNGOs and politics

These issues are discussed in more detail below.

### ***Participation***

LNGOs in Somalia, as in other CPEs, have been formed in response to donor pressure, and often lack the strong links to communities that would enable them to contribute to civil society at a local level, a crucial

task as argued in chapter 3. A major challenge for the SPP, is therefore, to strengthen links between LNGOs and communities and encourage greater participation by beneficiaries. CARE has made a start in this process through training workshops provided to NGOs in participatory programming and PRA techniques, and by insisting on community participation being a major component of NGO projects.

Community participation of many communities in SPP projects, however, remains towards the bottom of the participation ladder (see figure 7). Passive participation, participation by consultation and participation for material incentives are the most common forms. Community contributions are seen as a necessary evil caused by CARE's stringency with LNGO budgets and the attitude that the NGO knows best is still there. This is particularly true in some of the extension components of agricultural projects, where the attitude of LNGOs is still, to an extent, that of teaching ignorant farmers.

**Figure 7: A participation ladder**

Typology	Characteristics of each type
Self-mobilisation	People participate by taking initiatives independently of external institutions to change systems.
Interactive participation	People participate in joint analysis, development of action plans and formation or strengthening of local institutions. Participation is seen as a right.
Functional participation	Participation seen by external agencies as a means to achieve project goals, especially reduced costs.
Participation for material incentives	People participate by contributing resources, for example labour, in return for material incentives.
Participation by consultation	People participate by being consulted or by answering questions. External agents define problems and control analysis.
Passive participation	People participate by being told what has been decided or has already happened.
Manipulative participation	Participation is simply a pretence.
Source: Adapted from Pretty 1995: 1247	

Another challenge in moving up the participation ladder will be for LNGOs to focus more on the creation and strengthening of local institutions and on capacity building at the local level. As we argued in section 3, NGOs are seen as playing an important role in building community based organisations (CBOs) and representing community interests. At the moment, the creation and training of local institutions, such as farmers' associations or water committees is often a part of LNGO projects but has tended to take a back seat to more concrete activities. For example, in Bossaso, DanDor and SORSO (LNGOs) both included the establishment of village managed revolving funds as part of their projects, but in practice the rush to complete the more concrete activities of irrigation system and soil erosion improvements has meant that these activities have been neglected. Plans to hand over projects to community ownership are often a part of LNGO plans, but few LNGOs have provided CBOs with enough training to make this a realistic goal.

Without greater downwards accountability LNGOs may develop the ability to spend aid money, but will not empower communities to demand better governance. Stronger links with CBOs and traditional institutions might enable LNGOs to make the broader contributions to civil society envisaged in the emerging narrative, for example by contributing to emerging governance capacity or by allowing CBOs a stronger voice in regional and national level forums.

### ***Roles of LNGOs***

The LNGOs in the SPP are basically fulfilling the role of direct service providers. As discussed in section three, NGOs in other countries are generally conceived as playing a broader set of roles in the development process. Unless LNGOs gradually aim to move beyond direct service delivery to address these wider roles there is a danger that the SPP will simply move assistance from unsustainable direct implementation by INGOs, to unsustainable direct service delivery by LNGOs.

Part of the problem is related to the history of LNGOs discussed earlier. Initially modelled on international relief agencies in the 1980s, LNGOs since 1991 have moulded themselves in the image of the international relief agencies that flooded Somalia during the UNOSOM period. The model is, therefore, based on the relief mentality discussed earlier: direct implementation, free assistance, large scale projects and limited community consultation. CARE needs to try to encourage LNGOs to adopt a development rather than a relief perspective.

Working more closely with CBOs as discussed above would be part of widening the role of LNGOs. Another dimension would be the growth of LNGO networks and coordination between LNGOs. At the moment LNGOs tend to work in isolation. This reduces the voice and influence that they can have in contributing to policy. This might be at the level of influencing the policy of outside donors, of contributing to the emergence of governance structures, or getting involved in conflict resolution. Greater coordination would also allow LNGOs to learn from each other.

### ***Sustainability***

This is a key issue. At the moment LNGOs are largely dependent on continued CARE funding and the sustainability of both their projects and the LNGOs is questionable; a danger highlighted in section 3.4. Project sustainability is generally addressed in the LNGO proposals but, as suggested in the section on participation, the development of community capacity to take over projects has tended to be limited in practice. One focus of CARE's plans for project sustainability is to aim to achieve project sustainability through the inclusion of cost recovery or profit components in projects. A good example of this is Bani Adam, a LNGO which provides loans to farmers for land preparation and is repaid, in kind. By storing the crops it is repaid and by selling when food prices are higher the project has been able to make a profit (\$7,000 in the last season) and so expand its project area. An LNGO running a vocational school in Bossaso also aims to achieve sustainability by running a production unit as part of the school. This suggests that LNGOs engaging with the emerging business community is a key task and could improve sustainability.



The sustainability of LNGOs themselves is a difficult area, given the lack of other donors willing to fund LNGOs and the difficulties LNGOs are likely to face in raising funds locally. It is, however, a critical area for CARE to address. Attempting to strengthen advocacy for LNGOs and encouraging them to access funding from other donors will be a good start in this direction. One of the major constraints to LNGOs reducing their dependence on CARE for funding is the wariness of the rest of the international community about funding LNGOs, because of negative experiences in the past. CARE has been working to reduce this legacy of suspicion by promoting its work with LNGOs among other donors in an effort to expand coverage.

CARE is also planning to hold training workshops on fund-raising strategies. If, however, these are to create more than pious intentions there may be a need for CARE to consider more concrete strategies. An example might be an insistence on having NGOs raise a certain proportion of funds from local sources in future projects. In the North West and North East strategies to encourage local administrations to take over some responsibility for services would also be part of a sustainability strategy. The local fund raising capacity of LNGOs raises the question of LNGOs relationship with Somali business. LNGOs interviewed claimed that businessmen had little interest in the work of LNGOs and regarded them with some suspicion because of the UNOSOM legacy. The LNGOs recognised, however, that they could be a potential source of funding in the future and that there was a need to cultivate better relations.

### ***Gender***

As we argued in section 5, it is crucial that women are involved in rehabilitation programming but in practice gender issues are often neglected and this is reflected in the SPP. Most LNGOs provide little more than lip service to gender issues and attempts to work with women's LNGOs have been limited, due to their low capacity. CARE may need to take a more proactive stance if critical gender issues are to be addressed. This might mean actively seeking out women's NGOs that do have potential and working with them to develop proposals. These could be smaller scale than current grants to fit with limited capacity. CARE could also take a more proactive stance in insisting on gender issues being taken more seriously by existing LNGOs, for example through the hiring of female extension agents in agriculture projects. Gender training for LNGOs, for example in the use of gender planning frameworks, is another area that could be developed.

### ***LNGOs and politics***

The relationship between LNGOs and local authorities and militias is clearly of crucial importance, given our argument in section four, that civil society in CPEs is a contested space. CARE's policy and that of the LNGOs interviewed was one of neutrality and attempting to keep LNGO projects completely independent from militia interference. This, however, is a tricky area to research. While LNGOs told me that they kept out of politics, it was impossible to verify this. They were unlikely to admit to having to pay off militia leaders out of CARE funds, for example.

What the LNGOs told me, was that they try to keep their work completely separate from local militias and political leaders. If they do get pressure from militias they appeal to local administrative structures, traditional elders or the community to solve the problem. LNGOs need to get the approval of local

administrations and traditional elders and inform them of what they are doing. Because the militia leaders rely, to some extent, on the support of clan elders, they can help the LNGOs to deal with pressure from militias. How accurately this represents the real situation is probably unanswerable. Two points, however, can be made. Firstly, this suggests that generating community support for a project is a way of insulating the NGO from political pressure. Militia leaders and political authorities will be wary of disrupting a project if the community is mobilised and the project is seen as delivering real benefits. If the LNGO is seen as lining its own pockets, militia leaders are more likely to demand their slice of the cake. Secondly, the resources in question are relatively small scale. CARE only funds the salaries of a few LNGO staff and project materials are limited: for example, concrete for wells, or irrigation networks, or a limited number of seeds for extension purposes. This makes it less likely that LNGO projects will attract the attention of militias or exacerbate conflict.

Attempting to avoid politics has been a necessary strategy for LNGO survival in southern Somalia. In the north east and north west, however, the question that arises is how LNGOs should attempt to interact with emerging governance structures that are not predatory. In the north west the emergence of a reasonably representative government with some, albeit limited, capacity, means that it will be important to consider whether new projects will contribute to or undermine the emerging governance capacity. In the north east, the local administration has recently collapsed, but if a new administration emerges, similar questions will need to be asked. For example, if LNGOs are providing services that should eventually be provided by government (health or extension for example), how should local administrations be involved? In the longer term, CARE might need to consider strategies such as insisting on local government contributions to projects.

### **7.3 Conclusion**

The SPP program is an example of an approach to rehabilitation that focuses on building the capacity of civil society organisations. In this section we have moved from broad issues to more specific and small scale programmatic issues of how to work with LNGOs. This in itself suggests a need for lowered expectations about what international agencies can achieve in supporting the emergence of civil society. Over four years and with an investment of approximately US\$ 7 million the project has begun a process of building a network of local organisations able to manage and implement development projects and of developing trust between LNGOs and communities, but this is still at an early stage. LNGOs in Somalia, like those in Afghanistan and south Sudan, lack downwards accountability, are heavily dependent on donors, and are not yet addressing the wider roles for civil society envisaged in the emerging narrative. This strongly suggests that using local institutions simply to receive and administer donor money can have only limited impact.

CARE's experience suggests that it is possible to develop worthwhile partnerships, even in a CPE, where the capacity of local institutions is extremely weak, but that establishing partnerships requires a major investment in time and resources and a comprehensive capacity building strategy. However, unless the project can address the challenges discussed above, it is in danger of replacing unsustainable direct

implementation by INGOs with unsustainable direct service delivery by LNGOs, which have limited downwards accountability and make few wider contributions to the growth of civil society.

## **8 CONCLUSION**

This paper has identified a strategy towards rehabilitation in CPEs that has been characterised as a civil society rebuilding approach. It has argued that this approach could be described as an emerging narrative, as similar arguments are being made by agencies and academics studying different CPEs across the world. The approach draws on currently popular development discourses around civil society, capacity building and linking relief and development and presents a simplifying story intended to mobilise action. The emerging narrative argues that in CPEs civil society has been undermined by the destructive effects of conflict. A key task for international assistance is therefore to strengthen civil society which it is hoped will enable a shift from relief to development, marginalise, or make more accountable, existing predatory authorities and create a platform for peace.

Section three summarised the literature around the concept of civil society and emphasised the need for a Gramscian counter narrative to the 'friendly NGO stereotype', especially in CPEs where issues of power and control are central. The processes affecting civil society in CPEs were then analysed. The literature generally notes, simplistically, that CPEs are destructive of civil society, but does not suggest how, or look at other processes at work. This section argued that, civil society is simultaneously attacked by warring parties, growing after the collapse of authoritarian states, falling back on traditional structures, moving into the parallel economy and being contested by remaining local authorities. The picture that emerges is more confused and contradictory than the literature suggests.

The review of the theory that informs this emerging narrative, suggested an overall need for caution, and lowered expectations about what outside assistance can achieve in rebuilding civil society. This need for tempered optimism was borne out by the case study of rehabilitation in Somalia. Civil society in Somalia has been a highly contested space and initiatives that threaten the authority of Somalia's 'warlords' risk a violent response. Attempts to move away from relief are made difficult because of a legacy of diversion, manipulation and suspicion towards aid. Despite these obstacles, however, some positive developments can be identified. In Somaliland and the north east, traditional elders played an important role in a process of conflict resolution. Local administrative structures are beginning to emerge that provide minimal functions of day to day governance and in parts of the country there is a thriving business community. These are largely indigenous developments and what international agencies can contribute to these processes is likely to be limited. They can support positive developments but cannot make them happen

This is what CARE has attempted to do in a project that supports local NGOs but CARE's experience demonstrates the need for lowered expectations. The low initial capacity of CARE's partners has meant that even developing a minimum of project planning and management capability and accountability has required major investments in time and resources. Getting genuine community participation, moving towards sustainability, moving beyond direct service delivery to address wider roles and addressing gender issues are all long term goals that rely upon this initial groundwork.

CARE's project is also narrowly focused on local NGOs and does not embrace the full diversity and complexity of civil society outlined in section seven. It is also essentially socio-economic in nature, aiming at rebuilding local livelihoods and developing local institutional capacity to continue this process. While it is unfair to criticise CARE for not doing something which it did not set out to do, it is illustrative of a more general weakness with the civil society rebuilding approach. International agencies have tended to focus on civil society institutions simply as conduits for aid money, in an attempt to make humanitarian assistance more sustainable and developmental. This, however, tends to create organisations which lack downwards accountability, are heavily dependent on donors, and are not yet addressing the wider roles for civil society envisaged in the emerging narrative. There is little evidence for the claim that strengthening civil society may create a platform for peace and marginalise warlords. The rehabilitation of civil society is a socio-political process proceeding alongside the broader macro-political processes that occur after conflict. It is unlikely to serve as a substitute for these macro level political processes and warring parties will probably still have to be accommodated in national level political settlements, as Liberia demonstrates. Rebuilding civil society is not a convenient substitute for the complicated task of rebuilding the state and tackling problems of governance.

These conclusions do not invalidate the emerging narrative but they do suggest that it is overly simplistic and optimistic and exaggerates what international agencies can achieve. Civil society rebuilding does hold out the promise of giving non military interests a stronger voice. It can start a process of changing the aid delivery culture from relief to development, making the provision of assistance more sustainable and less dependent on outside agencies. Perhaps, by increasing the voice of civil society, it can begin a process of making political leaders more accountable and contribute to a demand for better governance. It is important to recognise, however, that achieving these objectives will be a slow and largely indigenous process. If international agencies are to contribute they will need to make long term investments and adopt small scale perspectives. Civil society rebuilding is not a magic wand for the problems faced in today's CPEs, but it does suggest a strategy that could enable international agencies to address some of the failings of past humanitarian assistance. This paper has only been able to scratch the surface of what happens to civil society during and after CPEs and the question of whether and how it can be supported. Further comparative studies of capacity building initiatives in south Sudan and Afghanistan would be especially valuable and more detailed work needs to be done at the community level to understand more fully how local institutions respond to and cope with conflict.

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